



Testimony to the Senate Finance Committee
SB 26 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health
Program, and Social Services Programs-Eligibility and Enrollment
Position: Favorable

February 2, 2022

The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Third Floor, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Senate Finance Committee

Honorable Chair Griffith and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a people-centered movement to expand economic rights, housing justice, and community reinvestment for working families, low-income communities, and communities of color. Economic Action Maryland provides direct assistance today while passing legislation and regulations to create systemic change in the future.

We are here in support of SB 26 and urge a favorable report.

Our direct service programs screen individuals for eligibility for food, energy, and other cost-savings programs. In 2022, we saved Maryland families \$50,000 through earned-benefits screenings. Each year we screen hundreds of consumers across the state that were unaware that they qualified for these critical programs. Often, individuals save enough to move from financial precarity to being able to save a portion of their income.

In addition, many programs require onerous paperwork and financial records in order to qualify. Many of our clients move frequently and these financial records may be misplaced or difficult to locate. The paperwork is not simple and requires time to navigate—time that may be lacking for individuals working an hourly job or balancing work and child/elder care. This is one of the reasons our program is so successful, we assist clients who need dedicated assistance to complete the paperwork to receive assistance.

We strongly support SB 26 because we believe that presumptive eligibility makes sense. If an individual has demonstrated financial need to receive state assistance in one area, it is reasonable to assume that the individual will qualify for other programs with similar income thresholds. Fast-tracking

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individuals into these programs benefits struggling families, reduces paperwork and inefficiencies in the system, and ensures that our programs are reaching families as intended.

For all these reasons, we support SB 26 and urge a favorable report.

Best,

Marceline White
Executive Director

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